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## A PRELIMINARY SKETCH OF LENÁPE CULTURE

By M. R. HARRINGTON

IN concluding a previous article in this journal, setting forth a few facts gathered from the Delaware or Lenápe Indians now living in Canada,<sup>1</sup> I called attention to the possibility of obtaining further information from their 'brethren in Oklahoma. The first opportunity came in 1908 in connection with my work for the University of Pennsylvania Museum Expedition, supported by George G. Heye, Esq., after which for several years I was enabled to make numerous visits to the Oklahoma bands. It is proposed to publish the complete results as one of the Anthropological Publications of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, but in the meantime a brief sketch of the material at hand, derived almost entirely from Indian sources, may prove of interest.

The Delaware Indians, or, as they call themselves, the Lenápe, are variously regarded as a tribe, composed of three bands, or as a confederacy, embracing three closely related tribes. For the present, at least, as being nearest in line with the known facts, I have adopted the latter view. Most writers agree that, at the time of the settlement of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, there were three great geographical divisions or tribes of the Delaware people: the Unámi, or Delawares proper; the Unalachtigo (now pronounced Unala'tko), and the Mínsi, or Munceys: a classification which has been verified by several of the older Lenápe in Canada. These Indians informed me that the people who went "west to Kansas" were mainly Unámi, with a few Mínsi; while the band brought to Canada by the Moravian missionaries and settled on Thames river were also largely of Unámi extraction. The Mínsi coming to Canada settled farther up the Thames, while another group, mainly Unámi, became known as the Delawares of Grand river.

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<sup>1</sup> Vestiges of Material Culture among the Canadian Delawares, *American Anthropologist*, N. S., vol. 10, no. 3, 1908.

I have thus far been unable to locate the survivors of the Unala'tko—they seem to have lost their tribal identity. Yet the names of two other tribes, the One'tko, or Nanticoke, and the Mahikani, or Mohican, are not only still remembered as those of affiliated peoples, but their descendants are pointed out even to this day.

The geographical divisions of the Lenápe today, with population figures taken from the *Handbook of American Indians*, are approximately as follows:

1. Delawares of Caney River, near Dewey, Oklahoma. Unámi dialect....	870
2. Delawares of Washita River, near Anadarko, Oklahoma. Dialect slightly different from above, but not yet identified .....	95
3. Delawares of Grand River, near Hagersville, Ontario. Mínsī dialect; some Unámi remembered .....	150
4. Moravians of the Thames, near Bothwell, Ontario. Mínsī dialect, but some can speak Unámi .....	347
5. Munceys of the Thames, near Muncey, Ontario. Mínsī dialect .....	122
6. "Munsee" with Stockbridge in Wisconsin .....	260
7. "Munsee" with Chippewa in Kansas .....	45
Total population, about .....	1,889

While I have visited all the above groups except the last two, the information here presented was derived mainly from the Delawares of Caney river and the Munceys of the Thames, which may be considered successors respectively of the old Unámi and Mínsī.

*Social and Political Organization.*—The Unámi, as represented by the Delawares of Caney River, are divided into three totemic groups or phratries, each named after an animal—Wolf, Turtle, and Turkey. The widely accepted view that these groups represented the three geographical divisions, Mínsī, Unámi, and Unala'tko, finds no confirmation among the Indians today, who assert that they have always had the three divisions. Nor is there any special attempt to connect the persons known to be of Mínsī descent with the Wolf totem, which might well be the case had the Wolf been the exclusive totem of the Mínsī. In the same way the surviving Mínsī in Canada, having two such groups, the Wolf and the Turkey, claim that they never heard of the time when the

Wolf was the sole totem of their people. It is said, however, that in former times the phratries occupied different villages.

Attributes of the animals in question are used as names for the phratries instead of the colloquial names of the creatures themselves. Thus the Wolf phratry is called *Ták'sūt*, or Round-foot; the Turkey, *Pelē'*, or Don't Chew, while the Turtle is called *Po'kaun'go*, said to mean "Crawling" or "Dragging along."

Each of the three phratries is composed of a number of smaller groups or clans, the names of which are not totemic. In the Turtle the following clans were remembered by my informants: *O kē hó kī*, Bark Country; *Ē ko on gwē ta*, Under the Hill; *Ol ha ka mī' ka' so*, Hollow where a Lodge has Stood; *Wī la nong' sī*, Beggars; in the Turkey phratry: *Lī' lī wai yo* (not interpreted); *Muk wīng gwē ho' kī*, Rubbing the Eye; *O pīng' ho kī*, Opossum Country; *MuX ho wī Xa' kon* (not interpreted); *MuX am hok' sī*, Blood Red Land; *Kū wē ha' kī*, Pine Country; *Mun' hat ko wī*, Eccentric, "Cranky"; and in the Wolf phratry: *Mung' sūt*, Big Feet; *Wī sao het' ko*, Yellow Tree; *Pa sa' kwa nu ma*, Snapping Corn; *Ola' ma ne*, Red Paint; *Mūn ha ta' ne*, Scratching Ground; *MaX so' ta* (not interpreted); *A lī' ke*, Stepping Down. All but two of these, *Mun'hatkowī* and *Alī'ke*, may be recognized, masked under differences of notation and interpretation, in the list given in Morgan's *Ancient Society* (p. 172). Some of the other clan names given by Morgan were recognized as words, but not as clan names, while still others were not recognized at all. My informants stated, however, that many clans had died out and their names were forgotten.

The names of the clans are said to have had their origin in some traditional peculiarity of their ancestors or from some locality once frequented by them. Thus, the Snapping Corn clan, the members of other clans say, received its name from the tradition that its members were accustomed to pay moonlight visits to their neighbor's cornfields and snap off "roasting ears" for their own use; while the Pine Country and Blood Red Land clans were named for localities.

The Canadian Mīnsī, while retaining some remembrance of

clans of this kind, were unable to tell me their names; but these may possibly be obtained later from their tribesmen in Kansas or Wisconsin.

Members of any clan always regarded each other as near relatives, and strict clan exogamy prevailed. This, for many years at least, has not applied to the totemic group, marriages between members of the same phratry being of frequent occurrence. Membership in both clan and phratry was inherited in the female line only, the children of a couple belonging always to the clan and consequently to the phratry of the mother, whatever their father's phratry. However, a child whose parents belonged to different phratries was allowed to sit with either at the Annual Ceremony.

The old political organization has so broken down since the Delawares became scattered that a really satisfactory account can not now be obtained from the Indians. It is evident, however, that each phratry had a chief, *sakī'ma* (cf. "sagamore"), whose powers seem to have been rather limited. He managed to a certain extent the affairs of his group, and spoke for them in the councils and at the Annual Ceremony. It is said that his office was hereditary, falling to the nearest male relative within the phratry in event of his death or removal; for a chief might be deposed if the people became dissatisfied, and a new one chosen. Each chief had a counselor, or second chief, who aided him and took charge in his absence; and there was also an *ī'la*, or "brave," in each phratry who acted as war-chief, recruiting and leading war-parties. He, too, was provided with an assistant.

There was also, the Indians say, a head chief, who controlled the affairs of the entire tribe, and to whom the phratry chiefs acted as advisors; but no very definite information has yet been obtained on this subject.

*Life of the Individual.*—The glorious freedom of Indian life, of which the poet sings, turns out to be very much of a myth when we look beneath the surface and view in any tribe the daily round of existence as it really was, and still is in many cases. It is true that the Lenápe was seldom compelled to subject his personality and the labor of his hands to the will of another, an employer

or a master, as do the great majority of modern civilized men; neither were his actions so trammelled by police, law courts, and other human authority as ours are today. Instead he was bound by tradition, by the thousand and one rules and formulas handed down from the past. Bold indeed was the Indian who dared to turn his feet from the trail worn deep by departed generations: it seemed as if the dead hands of a hundred ancestors would reach forth to pull him back. His thought was something like this: "My grandfather was a great man; he lived thus and so, and left an honored name. Who am I, that I should presume to do things differently?" The old culture was more or less static, that of today, kinetic.

The chain of beliefs and observances began even before the birth of a Lenápe child. The Mínsi say that the husband of an expectant mother was often accompanied on his hunting trips by the spirit of the unborn child, whose romping and playing about the bushes, invisible to mortal eye, would nevertheless frighten away the deer and send the hunter home empty-handed. To prevent this a little bow and arrow were made and attached to the prospective father's garments, in the hope that the little spirit would play with them and stay quietly with his parent. Should this precaution fail, the child was thought to be a girl, and a little corn mortar and pestle were substituted for the miniature bow and arrow.

A new-born child, in Lenápe belief, did not obtain a firm hold on this world for some time after its arrival, its little spirit being easily coaxed away by the ever-present ghosts of the dead. For this reason it was wrapped as soon as possible in adult's clothing, by way of disguise, so that the ghosts would not notice it was new-born. Similarly deerskin strings or strips of corn-husk were tied on the wrists of children so that the ghosts would think they were tied fast to earth; and holes were cut in their little moccasins so that they could not follow the spirit trail. If the child's mother died shortly after its birth, these precautions were redoubled.

The umbilical cord was considered closely connected with the child's disposition, so care was taken to bury it in the woods to make the child fond of hunting if a boy, or, if a girl, near the lodge or in

the garden to make her fond of domestic duties. If an animal found and devoured the cord, the child was likely to resemble that animal in disposition.

Names were received most frequently from dreams. If one of the prospective parents or some friend dreamed, for instance, that someone named "Walking-with-the-trees" was coming, that name was given to the child, if a boy. If a girl, a suffix denoting "woman" was added. A name of this sort is "Finished-wings Woman." Among the Mínsī, at least, the name was formally announced to the tribe at the Annual Ceremony. Nick-names were common.

From the time children began to notice things about them, their education commenced. Their elders took great pains to instruct the boys as they grew in the principles and practice of hunting and warfare, the names and habits of living things, the different trees and herbs and their uses—in short, the

art of woodcraft complete. The traditions, rituals, and songs of the native religion, the numerous magic formulas for the various occasions of everyday use, the iron-bound rules of tribal etiquette, the stirring tales of warlike deeds and long migrations which formed

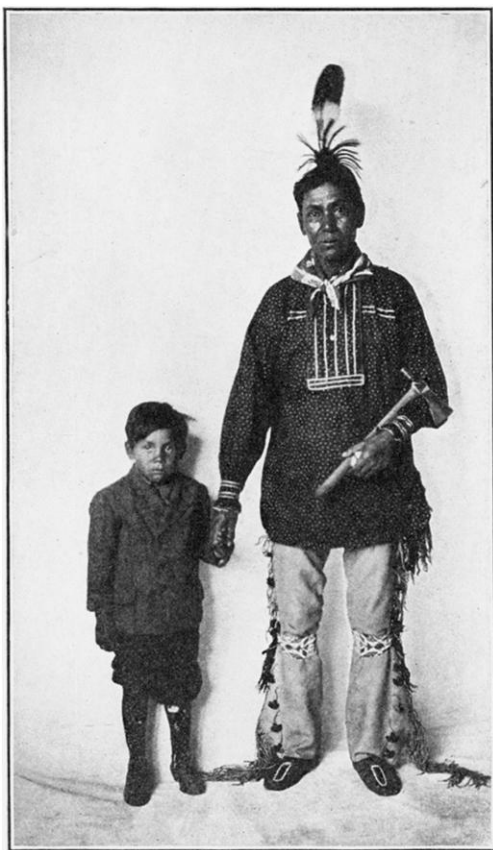


FIG. 41.—Lenápe father and son. Wí ta naX koX' w'e (Walking-with-the-trees).

the unwritten history of the people—all found place in the Lenápe curriculum.

Girls were taught the manifold duties and arts of the household, how to tan hides, and to plant and cultivate the garden. Like the



FIG. 42.—Lenápe woman with ceremonial hat.  
Kí cī lūng o neX'kwe (Finished-wings Woman).

boys, they, too, received instruction in the tradition and rituals of religion, and in the rules of life laid down by the elders. Even in such a matter as the loss of the first teeth the child was taught how to blacken the inside of each tooth with charcoal as it came out, then throw it away to the east before sunrise in the morning, repeating: "Come back quick, I want to eat sweet-beans!" This was said to insure a quick growth of strong new teeth.

When the Delaware boy was about ten years of age his parents began to treat him roughly and seemingly to abuse him; and finally, despite his protests, they painted his face black and drove

him away from home, to wander about all day without food. Then they would take him back and treat him well for a time, only to drive him away again later. Sometimes the boys would become so inured to this treatment that they could fast for several days at a time. But the hardening process was only an incidental result of



this apparent cruel treatment—the real object was to induce some supernatural being to take pity on the suffering child and in a dream or vision offer to become his guardian spirit, at the same time giving him some “blessing” or power that would be his reliance through life. Anyone fortunate enough to obtain such a vision was always held in high esteem and was much respected by his fellows.

When the first physical signs of womanhood appeared the girl was compelled to sojourn alone in a little hut far from other habitations; and always thereafter during the time of her periodic illness she was obliged to camp by herself in a little outhouse or shelter removed some distance from the family lodge. No girl or woman in that condition was allowed to enter a family dwelling nor to touch the food or cooking utensils used by others, nor could she enter the “big house” or temple where the Annual Ceremony was enacted. Birth, the *Mínsī* relate, was supposed to take place in the little outhouse, and the mother was not permitted to rejoin the family for a certain number of days after the event. When the young man began to think of marriage, he told his parents, who arranged matters, if possible, with the parents of the girl of his choice. Certain formal presents were made, the acceptance of which meant a favorable decision, after which the couple began to live together without further ceremony. While such unions were frequently permanent, the parties concerned did not hesitate to separate if they failed to agree, and were then free to make new alliances. Polygyny was sometimes practised, but not within recent years.

When death visited a Lenápe home, two shots were fired at nightfall to the west of the lodge, to warn away the hovering spirit of the dead. All through the night, while the body lay in state, the watchers played the moccasin game, not in the ordinary way, but with certain songs and practices used only on such occasions. When morning dawned two more shots were fired, this time to the east, and preparations were immediately begun for the burial. Dressed in his best clothing, with painted cheeks, the corpse was laid in his shallow grave, head toward the east, and covered with sheets of bark. After the grave had been filled, a low covered pen

of logs was built above it. Often some of the belongings of the deceased were enclosed in the grave.

*Public Activities.*—Among the activities dear to the hearts of the old-time Lenápe, war took a prominent place. When it was decided to go on the warpath, an *í'la*, or brave, appointed for the purpose, announced that he was about to go out "hunting men," and called for volunteers. Rarely did he call in vain, for there were always warriors who craved excitement and the chance to win renown, even when patriotic motives were insufficient to make them enlist. So they sang their war-songs and danced one by one about the war fire, as a sign that they would join the party.

After the expedition had fairly started the leader gave each of his band a little of the "brave medicine" which he carried and which was supposed to protect them from injury if they followed the regulations. A successful war-party, returning with scalps, was received with great rejoicing at the village, and a war-dance of two days' duration, with social dances every night, was arranged in honor of the victors. The dancers did not circle about in this form of war-dance, but danced eastward a little way, carrying the scalps, then back to the western side of the dance-ground where the singers sat. Sometimes these war-dances were held in obedience to visions, even in times of peace, in which case scalps were not carried.

Dearly as the Delaware loved the glory and excitement of war, the milder diversions of sports and games found a warm place in his affections. A form of lacrosse; the game of "snow-snake," in which polished wooden wands were thrown for great distances across the snow; an amusing football game, in which women contended with men, the men kicking and the women throwing the ball; the moccasin game, in which a bullet was hidden under one of a row of moccasins and the opponent required to guess which—all were popular, whole communities attending and betting against one another. Besides these three was the game of bowl and dice; the "scatter game," resembling jackstraws; a game played with a hoop and javelins, and another with bows and arrows. While not now remembered, it is possible that the phratries formerly took sides against each other in games, as the Iroquois phratries still do.

Seldom did the people gather for games or ceremonies, the Annual Ceremony excepted, without enjoying a night of social dances around a blazing fire. Among such, all different, were the Leader, Buffalo, Raccoon, Turkey, Duck, Fish, and Snake dances; also, palpably of modern origin, the Horse, Drunk, and Stirrup dances. Music was furnished by a few picked singers, who marked their rhythm with rattle and drum.

Special organizations or societies within the group were apparently not so frequent among the Lenápe as among the Iroquois, for I obtained accounts of only two, both in the Mínsī tribe. One of these was the Witches, an order composed of twelve malevolent conjurors, all holders of the "bad medicine," while the other, comprising twelve benevolent shamans, was known as the Masks, and was quite similar to the False-face Company of the Iroquois. Both had stated meetings and rites.

Among the public activities of a people is usually included the punishment of crime, but among the Lenápe, as with most Indian tribes, such matters were left largely to private agreement (or disagreement) among the interested parties. For murder the relatives of the victim usually demanded a heavy payment from the family of the slayer, but sometimes nothing would satisfy them but the death of the guilty man. In particularly atrocious cases of rape the offender frequently met death at the hands of the victim's kinsmen; but for theft, whipping, in addition to the return of the stolen property or its equivalent, was the only punishment. While the chiefs of the phratries concerned acted to a certain extent as judges or referees, there was no regular judicial system, so far as could be discovered.

*Houses.*—Within a few years there have been lodges still standing which the Lenápe say represent the type used by their ancestors in their fairly permanent villages. These were rectangular in ground-plan, and were constructed with a gable like a modern wall-tent, but with a hole in the top to let out the smoke. The framework was of stout poles tied together with bark withes and covered with sheets of elm-bark, the whole structure very closely resembling the type once commonly used by the Iroquois, and sometimes seen

even today among the Kickapoo, Sauk and Fox, and other Central Algonquian tribes. It is quite possible, of course, that other types also were used but have been forgotten. Within, the people spread their mats, skins, and other bedding along the walls on the bare, hard-beaten ground, or on raised sleeping platforms of poles. The fire burned in the center, while from the rafters above hung dried venison and pumpkins cut in strips, braided strings of corn

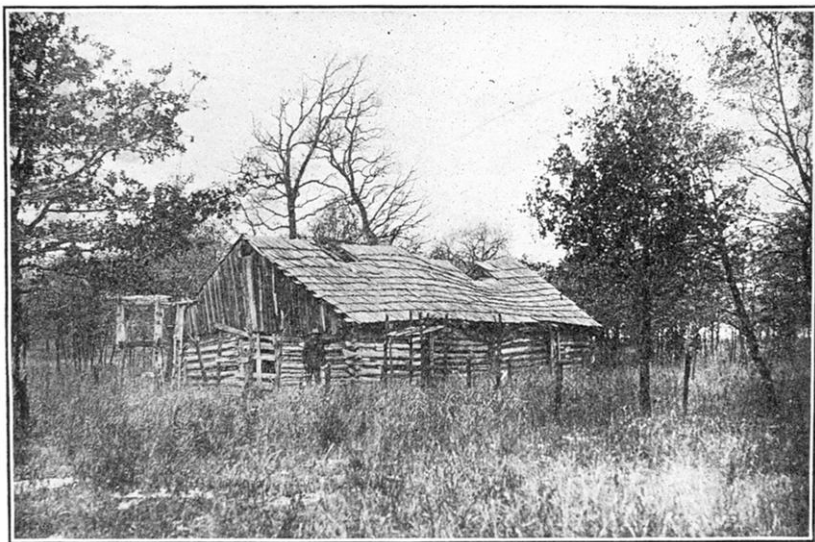


FIG. 43.—Lenápe ceremonial house.

on the cob, and numerous bundles and bags containing ceremonial articles, medicinal herbs, and other treasures. Bark-covered arbors for use during hot weather were frequently erected near the family lodge.

The outhouses used by the women ranged from the crudest kind of a brush shelter to a small but comfortable bark lodge, while little tents covered with mats, skins, or any available material were sometimes provided for boys fasting in the woods. Sweat-houses were low, dome-shaped structures of poles covered with hides, mats, or anything that would retain the steam.

By far the largest buildings erected by the Lenápe were the

ceremonial houses or "temples," called in Unámi *Xing'wī kaon* and in Mínsī *w' a' tē kan*, both meaning "big-house". The last remaining "Temple", a long, low building, stands in a lonely grove of post-oak on Little Caney river, in Oklahoma, far from any human habitation. Built of rough logs, it is now provided with a roof of hand-split shingles pierced by two great smoke-holes, as shown in the illustration (fig. 43), but in former days the roof was of bark.

The length is about 40 feet from east to west, with a height at the eaves of about 6 feet, at the ridge 14 feet, and a width of 24.5 feet. Aside from certain ingenuities of construction which can not be discussed here, its chief interest lies in the two large carvings of the human face, one facing east and one west, which adorn the great central post supporting the ridge-pole. Similar carvings, but smaller, may be seen



FIG. 44.—Carved post in Lenápe ceremonial house.

upon each of the six posts which support the logs forming the sides (fig. 44), and still smaller ones, one upon each of the four door-posts. All twelve faces are painted, the right side of each red, the left black. The building is used only for the Annual Ceremony.

*Clothing.*—From colonial times until recent years when the Lenápe took up modern clothing, the dress of the men consisted of a shirt of calico or deerskin, a robe, usually of strouding or broadcloth, a breechcloth of the same material, leggings of deerskin or cloth, and deerskin moccasins, made in one piece and puckered to a

single seam down the instep—a familiar type in the central, eastern, and southern portions of the Eastern Woodland area (fig. 41). Many shaved their heads, leaving a short bristling crest, or roach, of hair running from a point just back of the forehead to the nape of the neck. At the crown, a part of this hair, allowed to grow long, was braided into a slender queue or scalplock, upon which an eagle-feather or two was tied. Others let their hair grow and hang loose. Sometimes head-bands of fur were worn, or caps decorated with bunches of loosely attached feathers, resembling somewhat the Iroquois style. Facial painting was universal, and tattooing was frequently practised.

For many years the costume of the Lenápe women, while Indian in style, has been made almost entirely from materials obtained from the whites. This consisted of a short calico waist with wide round collar heavy with brooches and a robe-like rectangular piece of broadcloth wrapped and belted about the waist in the form of a skirt, together with short cloth leggings and deerskin moccasins, both tastefully worked (fig. 42). A robe of broadcloth or strouding was worn over the shoulders, often beautifully decorated with ribbon appliqué, beadwork, and silver or German silver brooches, largely of Indian make.

After considerable trouble I succeeded in gaining some information from Indian sources as to the kind of clothing worn before the arrival of the whites. The robe-like piece used as a skirt, the Indians say, was formerly of deerskin or woven Indian hemp, and was worn very short. In summer the women left their upper parts uncovered, or at most tied on a piece of deerskin, over one shoulder and under the other; but in winter fur was substituted for the deerskin. In those days leggings were made of deerskin instead of cloth, and fancy embroidery in porcupine-quills and moosehair, dyed in different colors, took the place of the ribbon appliqué and beadwork seen today. Blankets made of Indian hemp and corn-husk are still remembered by some of the older Lenápe.

The tall hat shown in figure 42, a style used for many years by the women in their dances, is certainly a remarkable creation,

based on an old beaver hat of the "stovepipe" variety, decked with nodding ostrich plumes from the trader's store, encircled with silver bands and trimmed with bright ribbons. Another head-ornament was a highly decorated flat piece of wood, stiff hide, or slate, which was tied to the woman's braid of hair at the back of her head.

*Means of Livelihood.*—Like most Eastern Indians the Delawares sustained life by agriculture as well as by hunting, fishing, and the gathering of berries, nuts, and other natural food products. Six native varieties of Indian corn or maize—three soft and three hard—have been handed down from the old days and are still grown, while at least three varieties of squash and pumpkin, and beans in considerable variety, were cultivated. Land was prepared for planting by girdling the bark of the trees in such a way that the tops died out, letting the sunshine in, burning the brush, then scratching up the earth among the still-standing but naked trunks into rude hills, where the women proceeded to plant their corn, squashes, and beans. They were kept clean of weeds all summer, and after the harvest the corn was braided into strings and hung, protected with bark, on poles out-doors, or suspended from the rafters of the lodge; beans were put away in bags and baskets, while some kinds of squashes or pumpkins were cut into strips and dried.

For making corn bread of several kinds, soup, mush, and hominy, the corn, often previously hulled by boiling with ashes, was crushed in a wooden mortar with a heavy pestle, usually of wood, then passed through sieve baskets of varying degrees of fineness, depending on the use. Parched corn pounded fine and mixed with maple sugar sustained the warriors and hunters on their long marches, while greens, fresh and dried berries, nuts, roots, and maple sugar were welcome additions to the Lenápe family's bill of fare.

To the men fell the very important task of supplying the tribe with meat and most of their materials for clothing. All animals valuable for their flesh or skins were hunted with bow and arrow, the blowgun being sometimes used for the smaller mammals and birds. Ingenious calls were constructed to reproduce the cry of

the fawn, or the voice of the turkey, while game could also be attracted, so the Indians believed, by certain charms and medicines, some of which were also used to make the hunter invisible to his victim, or to add effectiveness to his weapons. The deadfall and the "twitch-up" snare seem to have been the most popular varieties of traps. Venison was cut in flakes, dried in the sun, and hung away for future use; while bear's grease, used much as the whites use butter and lard, was kept in bags made of deer-hides taken off whole.

Many of the old Lenápe fishing methods must have fallen into disuse when the tribes left the coast, but the Indians still recall spearing fish and shooting them with bow and arrow, both of which methods may be used on inland waters. A fishing party armed with such implements often set forth with torches at night, when the fish were in the shallows. Sometimes large quantities of green walnuts were crushed and thrown into pools to stupefy the fish, which soon came floating to the top and were easily landed. The most primitive method of all, perhaps, was employed when lakes or ponds were very low by reason of drought. For this, bushes of dense growth were cut and tied together, forming a rude seine of considerable length, composed of matted leaves and twigs, which could be pushed and pulled through the shallow water in such a way that the fish were surrounded and dragged to the shore.

The Mínsi tell of making fish-traps in rivers by running a close fence of poles driven firmly into the bottom from bank to bank, but leaving a narrow aperture in the center with a net behind so arranged that the fish could enter but not escape when driven downstream by beaters above.

Since the migration westward the only shellfish available for food have been freshwater mussels of different species, which were collected in considerable numbers and cooked on heated stones.

Transportation by water was of great importance while the tribes lived on the coast, and was but little less so during a large part of the slow migration westward. But when the people reached Kansas and Oklahoma, where waterways are scarce, the art of canoe building was lost, although the memory of it still lingers.



The dugout seems to have been the most popular form among the Lenápe, but lighter canoes of elm and hickory bark were also made. All were propelled in the usual way, with poles and paddles. For temporary use six or more logs lashed together in the form of a raft with bark withes carried people and baggage across waters or down streams as required. Pack-baskets of various sizes, carried with the aid of a burden strap across the chest, were used by everyone.

*Industries.*—The old native arts and industries are today for the greater part abandoned, but many are still remembered by the older Lenápe. In woodworking, the use of fire for hollowing out mortars, bowls, and canoes is the most primitive process that has survived until recent years. The workman merely laid hot coals on the spot he wished to hollow out, then after these had lost their heat he scraped out the charcoal with a musselshell or other suitable implement; then repeated the process.

Bowls, buckets, canoes, twine, and rope were manufactured from different kinds of bark, which was also used to cover lodges, while the ubiquitous basket was here made of splints and of certain tough roots which were boiled and split, then woven together, usually in the "twined" technique. A good account of the tanning of hides was obtained, but the processes of pottery making, stonework, the working of bone, horn, antler, and shell are now largely forgotten. Several native silversmiths still work at their trade among the Delawares of the Washita: their bracelets, brooches and other ornaments are made by the same processes of hammering-out, cutting, stamping, and engraving, all with the crudest of home-made tools, as were noticed among the Iroquois.<sup>1</sup>

For many years decoration with beadwork and ribbon appliqué has superseded the ancient art of embroidery with colored hair and porcupine quills, now nearly forgotten. Skillful enough in beadwork, the Delaware women are experts in ribbon appliqué, seen as decoration on moccasins, leggings, robes, and the like (pl. VI, b). Different colored ribbons are cut into patterns, mainly

<sup>1</sup> Harrington, Iroquois Silverwork, *Anthr. Papers American Museum of Natural History*, vol. I, pt. VI, 1908.

angular, some curved, then sewed together in strips so deftly

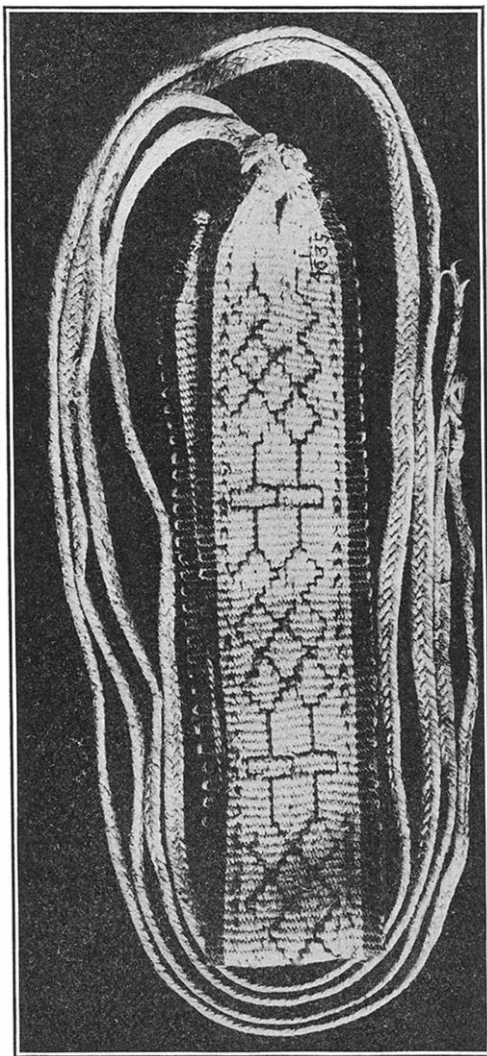


FIG. 45.—Lenape woven pack-strap.

that the stitches can hardly be seen. These strips can then be sewed upon the garment in such a way as to be removable at pleasure. The art is of singularly wide distribution, being seen at its best among the Miami, Peoria, Delaware, Shawnee, Potawatomi, Sauk and Fox, and Kickapoo; while it may also be found among the Alibamu, Kocasati, Seminole, Osage, Iowa, Oto, Kansa, Quapaw, Winnebago, Eastern Ojibwa, the Iroquois tribes, Penobscot, Micmac and other peoples.

Much was heard about the old textiles of the Delawares, but nothing was actually found in the way of specimens except two remarkable medicine-bags and a few burden-straps (fig. 45). The different bands reported the former use of Indian hemp robes and robe-skirts woven in patterns, the wide

use of corn-husks woven or coiled into sacks, mats, and even robes, and the use of rushes for mats and sacks.

The two medicine-bags seen in figure 46 have been in use, the Indians say, ever since the Lenápe lived by the Great Water, and

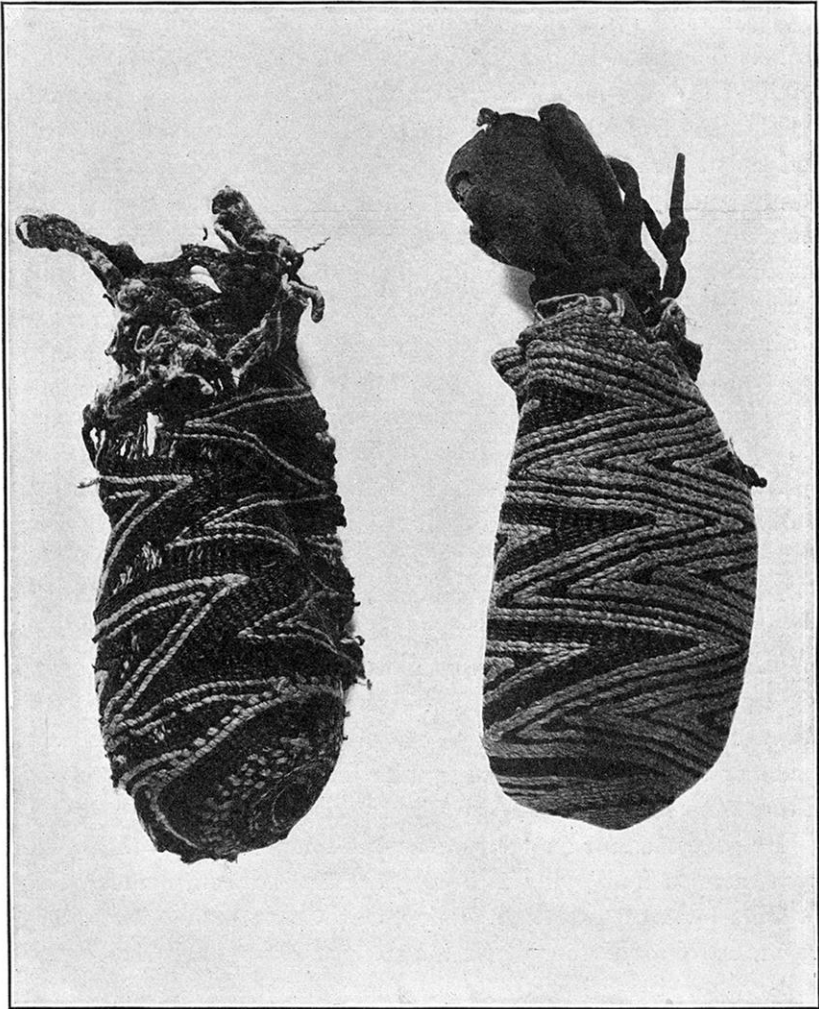


FIG. 46.—Lenápe woven medicine-bags.

have been carried by them on all their migrations. Certainly they bear every mark of antiquity, and seem to be unique. Fine examples of purely aboriginal textile art, they are the only pieces

of Lenápe weaving, with the exception of the burden-straps and a corn-husk mat, ever seen by the writer. The material seems to be Indian hemp, the lining deerskin. Both are decorated with zigzag lines of symbolic lightning, worked out in dark brown and white. They contain, in smaller deerskin bags, a finely divided shining substance resembling mica, which was, according to Indian belief, taken from the scales of the great mythical Horned Serpent, and constitutes a very powerful "rain medicine." They say it is necessary only to expose a few of the "scales" on a rock beside some stream to make the black thunder-clouds rise and refresh the thirsty corn-fields with rain. The explanation is found among the legends of the Lenápe, which relate the violent hatred between the Thunder Beings and the water monsters. If a Horned Serpent as much as shows his head above the water, clouds will arise bearing the Thunder Beings to attack him. Hence the belief that even part of a Horned Serpent will draw the thunder-clouds.

*Beliefs and Ceremonies.*—Perhaps the most interesting phase of Delaware life is expressed in their religious beliefs and ceremonies, of which only a brief account, unfortunately, can be given here.

At the head of their Pantheon stands Gicēlamú'kaong', usually translated "Great Spirit," who is also called, in the Mínsi dialect, Pa'tumawas, rendered "He who must be petitioned." This being is the great chief of all, and dwells in the twelfth, or highest, heaven above the earth. He created everything, either with his own hands or through agents sent by him, and all the great powers of nature were assigned to their duties by his word.

He gave the four quarters of the earth and the winds that come from them to four powerful beings, or Manít'towuk, namely, Our Grandfather where daylight begins, Our Grandmother where it is warm, Our Grandfather where the sun goes down, and Our Grandfather where it is winter. To the Sun and the Moon, regarded as persons and addressed as Elder Brothers by the Indians, he gave the duty of providing light, and to our Elder Brothers the Thunders, man-like beings with wings, the task of watering the crops, and of protecting the people against the Great Horned Serpents and other water monsters. To the Living Solid-face, or Mask-being, was

given charge of all the wild animals; while Our Mother, the Earth, received the task of carrying and feeding the people.

Besides these powerful personages were many lesser ones, such as the Small People, the Doll Being, the Snow Boy, and the Great Bear. Certain localities, moreover, were the abode of supernatural beings, while animals and plants were thought to have spirits of their own. Besides these there were, of course, the countless spirits of the human dead.

This, then, was the supernatural world which, to the mind of the Lenápe, controlled all things—on which they must depend for health, for success in all their undertakings, even the daily task of deer hunting or corn-raising. Benevolent beings must be pleased, and bad spirits combated and overcome, or at least placated.

The main channel of communication between the supernatural world and man was the dream or vision, obtained, as before described, by fasting and consequent purification in youth. Through the vision the young man obtained his guardian spirit or supernatural helper, who gave him some power or blessing that was his main dependence through life, his aid in time of trouble, the secret of his success. No wonder, then, that visions and helpers form the basis of Lenápe belief and worship. I heard of one man, a Mínsī, who claimed the Sun as his protector. Sometimes, it is said, he would hold his bare hands up toward the flaming face of his guardian, then would press them against his own cheeks. When he removed his hands, it was seen that his face, clean before, was now painted in brilliant colors! "Surely," the people cried, "this man is in league with the Sun!" Another old warrior used to seem strangely excited when the black clouds began to gather on the horizon and spread themselves over the land. Stripping himself to the breechclout he was ready to go out when the storm broke. He loved to expose his body to the driving gusts of wind and rain—the dazzling lightning flashes were his delight, the appalling roar was music to his ears—he was "in league with the Thunders." Others claimed such helpers as the "Living Solid-face," the Spirits of the Dead, the Owl, the Wolf, or the Wild Duck.

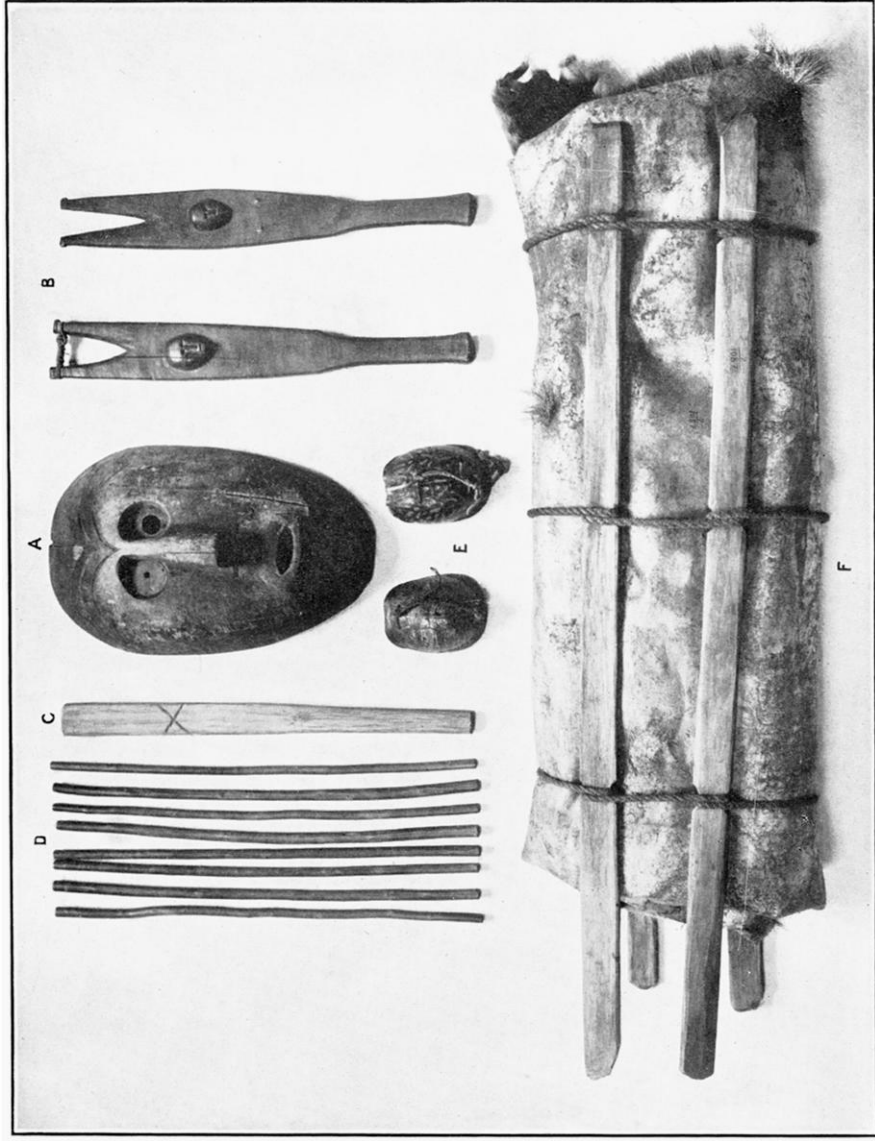
Those favored by such visions were considered the leading people

of their community. They usually composed rhythmic chants referring to their visions, and appropriate dance songs to go with them, to recite at the Annual Ceremony.

Belief in a soul or spirit surviving the death of the body formed an integral part of Lenápe philosophy. It is supposed to linger near for eleven days after death, and is addressed and offered food by the surviving relatives, sometimes in a formal "Feast of the Dead;" but on the twelfth day, they say, it leaves the earth and finally makes its way to the twelfth or highest heaven, the home of the Great Spirit, where it leads a happy life in a land where work and worry are unknown. Some persons are thought to have the power of communicating with the departed. The Indians say that the blood in the dead body draws up into globular form and floats about in the air as a luminous ball, but this is not the real spirit.

The greatest religious event of the Delaware year, which remains the best expression of the old tribal life, is the Annual Ceremony, held in the specially constructed "temple" or "big house" before mentioned (fig. 43). About this quaint old structure, when the October leaves are yellow, the people pitch their camps, to renew again their ancient rites for twelve consecutive nights, while within the building, the twelve grim, carved, painted faces, frowning from the wooden pillars, watch and see that all is well. These represent the twelve messengers of the Great Spirit.

Dry grass is spread around the sides of the house, and where the people sit, each phratry in its appointed place, the center being left free except for two great fires which furnish light and heat. Three men and three women are appointed as caretakers, to guard and sweep the building, cook and serve the feasts, and tend the fires. When the people have gathered, some time after dark, one of the chiefs makes a speech in which he addresses the Great Spirit and the Manit'towuk, his helpers, giving thanks for past benefits and praying for future ones. Then after he has set forth the rules of the ceremony and delivered some moral homilies, he gives the floor to the leader of the meeting, who, standing by the great central post with its weird carved faces, begins to shake a little rattle of



LENÁPE CEREMONIAL OBJECTS

A. Mask. B, C. Drumsticks. D. Prayer wands. E. Turtle-shell rattle. F. Drum.

box-turtle shell (pl. iv, *e*) and chant, in a high monotone, the story of his vision. Meanwhile two drummers have taken their places before a peculiar drum made by rolling up a dry deer-hide and stuffing it with grass (pl. iv, *f*). As the chanter utters each word the drummers repeat it in the same tone, producing a very peculiar effect. Finally the recital is finished, and he starts his dance-song, which the drummers take up, beating time with flat drumsticks (pl. iv, *c*), and dances about the fires, still shaking his rattle, followed by as many of the people as care to join. When he has finished all his verses, after a short intermission, the turtle-rattle is passed from hand to hand until it reaches the next man blessed by a vision, who, in his turn, takes up the exercises, and the whole performance is repeated, with the exception that the songs are different, to conform with the new leader's supernatural experience.

When the turtle-rattle has made the circuit of the "big house," usually along toward morning, the people raise their left hands and repeat the cry "*Hooooo*" twelve times. The twelfth cry, they say, reaches the twelfth or highest heaven and is heard, as a prayer, by the Great Spirit. A morning feast is next in order—corn-meal mush, called *súppan*, eaten with musselshells for spoons. Then the participants disperse until the next night.

On the fourth day a band of hunters set out to obtain venison for the feasts in the "big house," returning the seventh day. Before leaving, they beseech the *Mis̄ng'w'*, or Solid-face, the guardian of game, to give them good luck. This being is impersonated by a man wearing a bear-skin costume and a wooden mask painted half red and half black (pl. iv, *a*), and carrying in his hands a staff and a turtle-shell rattle. Solid-face is seen about the camps from time to time as the ceremony progresses, frightening the children into good behavior, and occasionally entering the "big house."

Each night the same performance is repeated until the ninth, when the ashes in the fireplaces are carried out of the western door, used only for this purpose, and a new fire is lighted with fire-sticks, operated, like those of the Iroquois, on the pump-drill plan. Prayer-sticks, to hold up when the cry of "*Hooooo*" is raised, are distributed this night (pl. iv, *d*), and a pair of very old forked drum-sticks, each



bearing the carving of a human face (pl. IV, *b*), take the place of the plain sticks used before. One of the old sticks bears carved breasts to represent a female, and the two are said to symbolize worship by both men and women. The sticks are somewhat similar to those I found among the Grand River Delawares in Ontario, now in the American Museum of Natural History. The pair obtained in Oklahoma for the University of Pennsylvania Museum were, the Delawares say, brought from their eastern home when the tribe migrated.

The twelfth night is given up to the women to recite their visions. The day after, about noon, the worshippers file out, and forming a line facing the east, raise their hands and cry twelve times to the Great Spirit, the prayer word "*Hooooo*". This ends the ceremony; but before they leave, the care-takers, the drummers, the speaker—everyone who has been of service to the meeting—is paid with wampum, which is afterward redeemed with money at the rate of one cent per bead, and is saved to use again the next time.

Another form of this worship, now obsolete, was noted, lasting only eight days, and differing in some other particulars. The Mínsī Annual Ceremony, as related to me by the late James Wolf of Munceytown, Ontario, differed from the above in only a few minor details, one of which was the absence of a Solid-face, none being allowed in the Mínsī "big house." Their twelve mask-holders had a meeting-house of their own—in fact, like those of the Iroquois, they formed a society of shamans whose chief function it was to expel disease.

The Unámi Solid-face, on the other hand, was the chief patron of the chase, and was supposed to have the power of bringing back lost or stolen cattle and horses, the doctoring function being called into play only rarely, if at all. His special ceremony, a dance with a feast, was held in the open air in the spring, but can not be described in detail here. To offset any notion that the Unámi Solid-face might have been borrowed from the Iroquois in comparatively modern times, I will quote a few lines written by Rev. David Brainerd, a missionary to the Delawares,<sup>1</sup> September 21,

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of the Rev. David Brainerd, Chiefly Taken from his Own Diary*, by Rev. Jonathan Edwards (including his Journal), New Haven, 1822, pp. 237-238.

1745, relating an occurrence of the previous May. Speaking of a "devout and zealous Reformer, or rather restorer of what he supposed was the ancient religion of the Indians," whom he met a hundred and thirty miles up the Susquehanna, above the English settlements, he said: "His . . . garb . . . was a coat of boar [bear?] skins, dressed with the hair on, . . . a pair of bear skin stockings; and a great wooden face painted, the one half black, the other half tawny; . . . the face fastened to a bear skin cap. . . . The instrument he had in his hand, . . . which he used for music . . . was a dry tortoise shell with some corn in it." This is an accurate description of the Solid-face in recent use among the Oklahoma Lenápe.<sup>1</sup>

Little wooden images, in human form, some male, some female, are still kept by certain Delaware families who, regarding them as mystic protectors of their health, give them a dance and feast every year, together with a fresh supply of clothing. These are similar to the little Nahneetis figure, once the property of the Canadian Mínsi, now in the American Museum of Natural History.<sup>2</sup>

One family maintained an otter cult, with an annual ceremony called "Feeding the Otter," in which a man, wearing an otter-skin, impersonated that mysterious animal, whose advice, given in a dream, had originated the cult many years before. Similarly a bear cult was kept up by another family. For the ceremony entailed by this belief, enacted every two years, a special lodge was built of brush, in which the head of a bear (later that of a hog) was carried about the fire in time to certain chants, and portions of the animal were burned as a sacrifice.

Within the last twenty or thirty years two new religions have been introduced among the Oklahoma Delawares by the Caddo—the Ghost Dance and the Peyote (or Mescal) Rite. The former belief soon died out, but the latter still persists, and at last accounts was even growing in favor.

<sup>1</sup> Brainerd also says, speaking of the same man: "He had a house consecrated to religious uses, with divers images cut upon the several parts of it"—undoubtedly a "big house" such as I have here described.

<sup>2</sup> Illustrated and described by Harrington, *Vestiges of Material Culture among the Canadian Delawares*, *American Anthropologist*, N. S., vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 417-418.

*Charms, Medicine, and Witchcraft.*—Besides the “rain medicine” contained in the woven bags before described, I succeeded in obtaining the charm known as “giant bear’s tooth,” used for wounds or other injuries. A little of the tooth is scraped off and given to the patient in water, with appropriate incantations. Many other charms, for good luck, gambling, hunting, love, and war were used.

Herbs and roots, the sweat or steam bath, and the various magic arts of the medicine-man or shaman, all figured in the treatment of the sick.

A tradition is still current among the Lenápe which attributes the origin of witchcraft to the Nanticoke (One’tko), who seem to have borne this evil reputation a long time, for Heckewelder noted the same tradition concerning them a hundred years ago.<sup>1</sup> Witches, it was thought, could fly through the air at night with the aid of the “bad medicine,” or might take the form of certain animals, in which guise they could go about unobserved to work their magic arts, to give their enemies bad luck, or to make them sicken and die. As before noticed, there was said to be an organized society of witches among the Mínsī.

*Cosmology.*—The subject of Lenápe cosmology is very difficult to master at the present day, for the spread of Christianity and book-learning have almost put an end to native ideas. The cosmic myth was nowhere found in satisfactory entirety, but the bare outlines, so far as obtained from strictly Indian sources, without reference to published accounts, are as follows: Some time after Gícēlamú’kaong<sup>1</sup> had created the world it became flooded with water, and it seemed to be a difficult matter to find earth with which to commence a new one. The Great Spirit (some Mínsī say Nā’napúsh,<sup>2</sup> an agent delegated by him) began to send down the various water animals which still survived to try to bring earth up from the bottom, but one by one they failed, and floated up to the surface dead. At last the muskrat was sent, and he succeeded

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<sup>1</sup> *An account of the History, Manners and Customs of the Indian Nations who once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighboring States*, by Rev. John Heckewelder, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Other Mínsī claim that the introduction of Nā’napúsh into this myth is due to Eastern Ojibwa (Mississauga) influence.



LENÁPE BEADED SHOULDER-POUCH

in bringing up a little dirt in his paws. This was placed on the back of a turtle, which, with the mud upon it, immediately began to increase in size, until the "great island upon which we live" was formed, round and flat, floating upon the waters.

The Sun, as before mentioned, was regarded as a person, or rather a *manit'to*, or spirit, and it was thought that he stopped in his course for a little while at midday, then went on. The Moon was a person also, and the stars were variously regarded as persons and animals. The heaven is twelve-fold, and in the twelfth or highest lives the Great Spirit. The four directions are respectively known as "Where the daylight appears" or east, "Warm place" or south, "Where it (the Sun) goes down" or west, and "Winter place" or north. As before noted, each direction is in charge of a powerful *manit'to*, or spirit, each one causing the wind from his own particular quarter. When the alternate cold blasts and warm winds are felt in winter, the *Manit'towuk* of the North and the South are playing the game of bowl and dice, first one winning, then the other. The tornado is a gigantic and powerful spirit walking on his hands, his long hair trailing the ground and wiping out forests and villages. Man-like beings with wings produce the thunder and bring the storms; the lightning-flashes are their arrows.

*Measures of Time and Space.*—Time was divided into years, each having four seasons and approximately twelve moons, appropriately named. One of the spring moons was known as "Frog Moon," while another, about July, was "Real Summer Moon," and still another, about January, "Dreaded Moon."

The divisions of the day were: morning, near-noon, noon (where the sun stands still), past noon, evening (going-down-quick time), sunset, dark, and midnight. The time of day was defined more exactly by pointing with the finger to the position of the sun at the time referred to—"sun about so high."

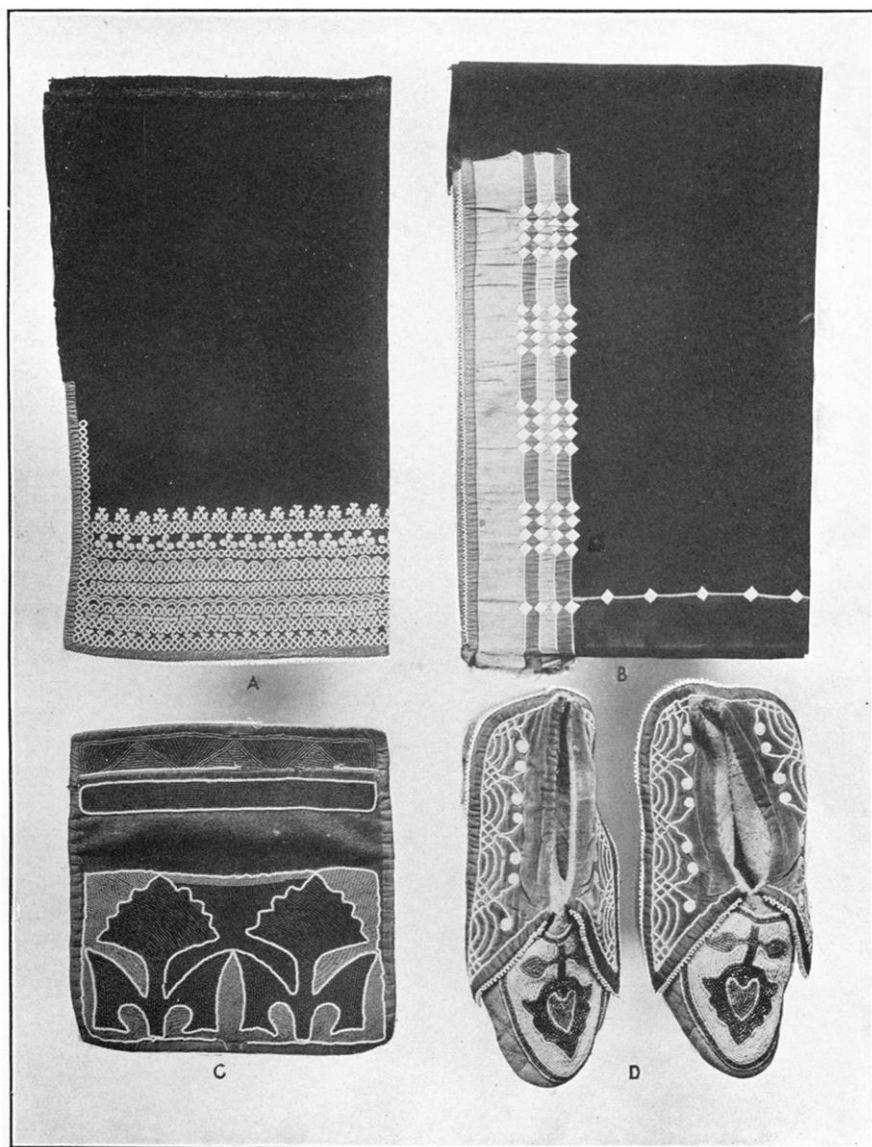
Two linear measures have so far been found, the "step," about two feet, and the "long as the back," somewhat less than a yard, the first used for measuring ground, the latter for wampum. One hundred beads of wampum are supposed to equal the "long as the back."

*Records.*—Little was found in Oklahoma regarding the recording or communication of ideas by artificial means, but the Canadian Lenápe reported the use of pictures painted or scratched on flat pieces of wood, peeled trees, or other suitable surfaces, which could be read by any Indian. For preserving rituals and sometimes other records, wampum was often strung into strings and belts in different combinations of the white and purple beads which could be easily read, but only by the initiated.

However, the sacred myths, historical traditions, and the vast aggregation of songs, tales, and anecdotes, forming what might be called the unwritten literature of the people, were handed down for the most part by word of mouth. It is noticeable that the wonder stories of the dealings of mankind with the mysterious spirits and animals were never told except in winter, when everything is frozen up and no little insect or reptile could hear and report what was said. "Culture hero" myths of undoubted Lenápe origin have not been encountered as yet.

*Art.*—The esthetic instinct of the Lenápe is today restricted in its expression to patterns worked in beads, ribbons (pl. v, vi), and on silver; but in former years the field of art was, of course, much wider. Very tasteful patterns and combinations of colors are evolved, curved designs, in the main conventionalized plant forms, predominating in the beadwork, and geometrical combinations of triangles, squares, and elongated hexagons in the ribbon work (pl. vi, b). The decorations on silver articles consist mainly of straight lines, curved lines, dots, and circles, arranged in various combinations, mainly geometric, but animal forms and highly conventional floral patterns are sometimes seen. True symbolism is seen only in the shape or decoration of certain ceremonial objects, as in the case of the lightning symbols used in decorating the bags for the rain-medicine (fig. 46).

*Music.*—While resembling that of other Eastern tribes, the music of the Lenápe seems to possess certain peculiarities of its own, which a competent musician might work out. It is almost entirely vocal, the only true musical instrument on which tunes can be played being the native flageolet of cedar. The dry hide drum



LENÁPE BEADWORK AND RIBBONWORK

A, Women's beaded leggings. B, Women's ribbonwork leggings. C, Beaded pouch. D, Beaded moccasins.

(pl. IV, f), the water drum, and the hoop drum were also used, together with rattles of turtle-shell (pl. IV, e), horn, and gourd.

*Conclusion.*—It will be seen from the foregoing sketch of Lenápe culture, that while resembling other Eastern and Central Algonquian tribes in many points, and the Iroquois in a few, these people show considerable individuality, especially in matters ceremonial and religious. Even the Shawnee, with whom they have been long associated, possess a distinctly different system. The influence of other tribes in these matters is not very apparent except in the Mínsi division, where considerable Iroquois influence may be seen. But even here the foreign influence does not seem to have reached the Annual Ceremony. To what extent Lenápe religion, as here described, has been modified by European contact would be difficult to determine.

It must be understood, in conclusion, that the Delawares now live in frame and log houses fully as well appointed, as a rule, as those of the surrounding whites, and engage in the modern form of farming and in other occupations like their neighbors; that the daily use of Indian costume has long since been abandoned; that many of the ceremonies are no longer performed; that the native political and social organization is rapidly breaking down; that even the language is falling into disuse among the younger generation. In short, the greater part of the people are ignorant of the things of the past, and one must search diligently to find anyone able to give detailed information.

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